



MontCAS
Montana Comprehensive Assessment
System
August 2008 Newsletter

2008-2009 MontCAS Testing Windows

October 20 – November 21, 2008	English Language Proficiency (ELP) Grades K-12.
January 22 - March 6, 2009	NAEP, Grades 4 and 8, Reading, Math, and Science.
February 10 – March 25, 2009	CRT-Alternate, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math; Grades 4, 8, and 10, Science.
March 2 – March 25, 2009	CRT, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math; Grades 4, 8, and 10, Science.



Please Save the Dates

- January 29-30, 2009
- Billings, Montana – Crowne Plaza Hotel
- Assessment and test administration training sessions
- Keynote Speaker: Dr. Margaret Heritage
 - Dr. Heritage will provide information and "know-how" on formative assessment.
 - Information about Dr. Heritage can be found at the following link:
<http://www.cse.ucla.edu/about/ssearch.asp?staff=heritage>
- Details including registration information will be in the September issue of *JUMP*.

Test Coordinator Information

If your system has a new test coordinator this school year, please contact the Office of Public Instruction assessment staff with updated contact information. Please provide the test coordinator's name, email address, phone number, shipping address, and mailing address. OPI assessment staff contact information is at the end of this newsletter. Test Coordinator Information is also collected with schools' data during the OPI's Annual Data Collection (ADC).



Future Directions for MontCAS



In September 2008, OPI will post a questionnaire online to survey Montana educators about future directions for MontCAS. The questionnaire is being developed from major issues discussed by focus groups at the April 2008 OPI Assessment Conference.

- The window for completing the survey will open on September 15 and close on September 30, 2008.
- The link to the survey will be www.wested.org/MontCAS_survey It will not be available until September 15, 2008.
- Results of the survey will be reported at the November Board of Public Education meeting in Helena.
- Results will be used to inform a planning process for assessment in Montana.

Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) And Criterion-Referenced Test Alternate (CRT-Alternate)



CRT and CRT-Alternate Spring 2008 Results

- Reading and Math results for grades 3-8 and 10 have been available on the Montana Analysis and Reporting System (MARS) since June. Currently posted on MARS are: school and system reports including Roster and Item Level Reports, School Summary Reports, System Summary Reports, and a System Roster data file.
- The Science results for grades 4, 8, and 10 will be posted on MARS on September 2. Included are the same reports for Science as were posted in June for Reading and Math. In addition, an added feature is access to school reports for System Test Coordinators using their system access codes.





- Printed Parent/Student Reports and cumulative file labels for Reading and Math in grades 3-8 and 10 and Science in grades 4, 8, and 10 will be mailed to System Test Coordinators September 15. System Test Coordinators can expect to receive them in the mail from Measured Progress by September 22.
 - In the shipment will be letters to accompany Parent/Student Reports for students who participated in the CRT with a nonstandard accommodation (s).
 - Please read the letter and send it **ONLY** with reports that include the section symbol (§) indicating a nonstandard accommodation (s). If a report has this symbol, the letter should accompany the report home.
 - Please **do not** send the letter with all reports. Thank you.
- The *2008 CRT and CRT-Alternate Interpretive Guide* is online:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/assessment/crt/ta/08InterpretationGuide.pdf>
- Reports for home-schooled students who took the CRT or CRT-Alternate in your school:
 - The results for these students are not included in any of your system or school reports.
 - You (or the County Superintendent) will receive the paper Parent/Student Report and cumulative label for each home-schooled student who took the test in your school.
 - Please contact the County Superintendent to arrange for delivery of the reports.



Tips

Learning from CRT-Alternate: Parent/Student Reports and Administering the CRT-Alternate

Parent/Student Reports for students who participate in the CRT and the CRT-Alternate are the same format; however, there are separate Parent/Student Reports for the two assessments. The CRT-Alternate Parent/Student Report contains information on performance descriptors that define the performance levels of Advanced, Proficient, Nearing Proficiency, and Novice for the CRT-Alternate. The CRT-Alternate Parent/Student Report is intended to enhance classroom instruction by providing information on students' areas of strength and/or areas for improvement. A PowerPoint, *The CRT-Alternate Student Reports*, presented at the April 2008 OPI Assessment Conference is online. It shows the parts of the CRT-Alternate Parent/Student Report, and the notes pages provide an explanation. Other links that may be of assistance are also online. Please see the list that follows.

- PowerPoint*: *The CRT-Alternate Student Reports*
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/CRTAltStudentReport.ppt>
- PowerPoint*: *Connecting Assessments and Instruction* from a presentation by Gail McGregor at the April 2008 OPI Assessment Conference. This PowerPoint (slides and notes) addresses how administering the CRT-Alternate can help teachers of students with severe disabilities include goals and objectives in their students' IEPs that address academic skills included on the CRT-Alt within the context of their daily instruction.
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/CRTAltConnctingAssess.ppt>

***Reminders about online PowerPoints:**

To view the file as a PowerPoint file and be able to see the notes pages, the file must be saved.

1. If you are using a PC, right click on the link and select "Save target as"
2. If you are using a MAC, select "Save to disk."

- Expanded Benchmarks have been developed in the content areas of Reading, Math, and Science to outline a progression of skills that begin at the most basic level and lead to grade level performance of standards-based curricula. They are a valuable guide for teachers who have students who are performing well below grade level in academic areas and/or do not currently have standards-referenced instruction as part of their individualized education programs.

Reading:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/TA/ReadingBenchmarks.pdf>

Math:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/TA/MathBenchmarks.pdf>

Science:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/PDF/Assessment/CRT/TA/ScienceBenchmarks.pdf>

- Sample items illustrate some of the activities and supports used in the CRT-Alternate. The items online are dated 2006 and include Reading and Math. Science will be added.

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Phase2.html#RIAlt06>

MARS Training

- MARS, the secure online Montana Analysis and Reporting System is accessible by schools and districts with secure passwords at <http://iServices.MeasuredProgress.org>
Click on Montana or Montana ALT and then choose MARS.
- MARS training online:
 - PowerPoint:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/PDF/Assessment/CRT/08AnalyzeReportSystem.pdf>



- *User Guide*
 - <http://iServices.MeasuredProgress.org>
 - Select "**Montana**" or "**Montana ALT**" (either works for both CRT and CRT-ALT) from the dropdown menu and click "Enter."
 - Select "Forms and Manuals"
 - Select *MARS User Manual* (pdf)
- OPI provided training at your school or system
 - A form to request training at your school or system is online: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/PDF/Assessment/Forms/TrainRqst.pdf>
 - If your system is interested in OPI provided training, please print, complete, and fax the form to Karen Richem, 406-444-0743.

Recently Posted Online



Released items from the Spring 2008 CRT in Reading and Math, Grades 3-8 and 10 and Science in Grades 4, 8, and 10 are online:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Phase2.html#RI08>

1. For each grade, an Excel file precedes the multiple choice items. These Excel files contain both an answer key and a key to the standard being assessed.
2. Multiple Choice Released Item files contain items from all content areas tested in a grade:
 - a. Reading and Math for grades 3, 5, 6, and 7
 - b. Reading, Math, and Science for grades 4, 8, and 10
3. Constructed Response Items
 - a. One file per grade for each content area
 - b. Files include rubrics, scoring hints, and model papers



Updated Math Vocabulary List for the 2009 CRT

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/assessment/CRT/RI/09/09VocabLists.pdf>



Please welcome two new staff members at Measured Progress who are working with Montana.

- **Lynn Albee** is the new Program Manager for the CRT-Alternate replacing Jake Goldsmith.
- **Danielle Hornsby** joins the CRT staff as a Program Assistant.
- Their contact information is included on the next page in "Testing Contractor Contact Information."

Testing Contractor Contact Information

✚ MontCAS, the CRT and the CRT-Alternate – Measured Progress, Inc.

Dan Verdick, Montana CRT Program Manager

dverdick@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901 x2220

Nancy Hall, Montana CRT Program Assistant

nhall@measuredprogress.org or 888-792-2741

Danielle Hornsby, Montana CRT Program Assistant

hornsby.danielle@measuredprogress.org or 888-792-2741

Lynn Albee, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Manager

albee.lynn@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901x2309

Kevin Froton, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Assistant

kfroton@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901x2196

✚ MontCAS, the English Language Proficiency (ELP) – Questar Assessment Inc.

BJ Vickery, Program Manager

bjvickery@questarai.com or 888-854-9596

CRT-Alternate Beta Test

Please give this information to special education directors and teachers.



Special Education Teachers are invited to participate in the Beta Test of the newly formatted CRT-Alternate in Grades 4, 8, and 10 in Reading and Math. Teachers will administer a draft of the new tasklet format to a student and provide feedback. The Beta Test is the last step in the development process before the new format is administered in Spring 2009.

Details:


- The beta test consists of five short activities for Reading and Mathematics called “tasklets.” Each tasklet consists of five items. Each student will be assessed on a total of 25 items per content area.
- Students who participate in the Beta Test:
 - Should meet CRT-Alternate participation guidelines:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SpecED/CRTAltAssess.pdf>
 - Should be determined to have a significant cognitive disability by their IEP teams; and
 - May have taken the Spring 2008 CRT-Alternate when they were in grades 4, 8 or 10 and are in grades 5, 9, or 11 in the Fall of 2008 **OR** may be in grades 4, 8, or 10 in Fall 2008.
- Dates:
 - Training: September 30, 2008
 - Best Western Great Northern Hotel in Helena
 - Substitute reimbursement will be offered to participants.
 - Lodging is provided for participants living 90 miles or more away from Helena. Mileage, meals not provided during the sessions, and substitute pay are reimbursed. Renewal units are also available.

- All materials for the Beta Test administration will be provided at this session.
 - Beta Test Administration Window: October 1 – 7, 2008
- Please register online:
 - <http://iregister.measuredprogress.org>
 - Select “Montana” from the drop-down menu.
 - Then select the grade and session for which you have a student meeting the criteria for the CRT-Alternate Assessment.
- Question contacts or for help with registration:
 - Lynn Albee, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Manager
albee.lynn@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901x2309
 - Kevin Froton, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Assistant
kfroton@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901x2196
 - Judy Snow, jsnow@mt.gov or 406-444-3656
 - Gayle Allen, gallen2@mt.gov or 406-444-3511

October/November 2008 ELP Test Window

Below is a table of the materials and testing schedule for the 2008-2009 English Language Proficiency (ELP).



Date	Test Coordinator Checklist
August 1, 2008	Questar emails System Test Coordinators with information about ordering Level 1 (beginner form), Braille, and Large Print (LP) test forms.
August 4-22, 2008 	System Test Coordinators fax orders for Level 1, Braille, or Large Print (LP) forms to Questar: 866-460-9778. NOTE: Questar sent an email to all system test coordinators on July 29 with information about these test forms. If you need a copy of that email or have questions, please contact Karen Richem, krichem@mt.gov or 406-444-0748
September 4, 2008	Questar ships test administration training materials to System Test Coordinators
September 12 – October 18, 2008	System Test Coordinators provide training for test administrators (examiners). If your system would like assistance with training, please contact Karen Richem, krichem@mt.gov or 406-444-0748
October 6, 2008	Questar ships testing materials to System Test Coordinators
October 20 – November 21, 2008	English Language Proficiency (ELP) Testing Window
December 5, 2008	Deadline for systems to ship testing materials to Questar
February 2009	Questar ships reports to System Test Coordinators.

OPI Student Records Confidentiality Policy

As part of the of the student information system, Achievement in Montana (AIM), OPI has developed a *Student Records Confidentiality Policy* which explains the process the OPI will use to determine what data is considered confidential, how the data will be suppressed, to whom the data may be released, and the process for data transfer.



- The policy is online :
http://www.opi.mt.gov/pub/AIM/AIM%20Policies/Student_%20record_confidentiality%20policy.pdf
- If you need to have access to confidential data maintained by OPI, the request process is outlined in the *Student Records Confidentiality Policy*.
- All the forms needed to request such data are also included in the policy.
- If the request is approved, the OPI will not email or fax you the information. The data will be sent through the State of Montana's secure encrypted file transfer protocol, called ePass Montana.
 - In order to receive the data through ePass, you will be required to set up an ePass account. For more information about this service and instructions on creating your ePass account, please go to <https://app.mt.gov/epass/epass>
 - If you have questions about setting up your account, please contact the State of Montana Help Desk at 406-444-2000.
- If you have questions about the OPI *Student Records Confidentiality Policy*, please contact Donna O'Neill, doneill@mt.gov or 406-444-0793.



IMPORTANT: This is a good time for systems and schools to examine their security systems and policies for confidential data and ensure that no confidential data are sent via telephone, email, or fax.

ADC to Open September 2

ADC will open for data entry on Tuesday, September 2, and is due to your County Superintendent by Tuesday, October 21 and to the OPI Accreditation Division by Tuesday, October 28.

- If you have licensed professional staff, please confirm professional licenses, numbers, and currency. For accreditation purposes, educator and professional licenses must be issued before December 1, 2008.
- After you have completed entering your staff assignments, remember that you should review the Quality Educator (QE) report the next day.
- To see the report, copy the following URL into your browser:
<http://data.opi.mt.gov/QualityEdFte/Default.aspx>
- The ADC for your school or district does not need to be completed to view the QE Report. You just need to have entered your staff and wait 24 hours before looking at the QE Report.

2008 Montana Educator Forum

- *Educating Montana for a Profoundly Different Future: 16 Trends that Will Impact Montana Education*
- Keynote speaker is Gary Marx, author of the 2006 book, *Sixteen Trends... Their Profound Impact on the Future*
- September 26, 2008
- Red Lion Colonial Inn, Helena
- Sponsored by the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation
 - Information and pdf registration form:
<http://www.meamft.org/Forum%20brochure08.pdf>



Twelfth Annual
MONTANA
EDUCATOR FORUM

Transformative Assessment by Jim Popham

Compliments of the Office of Public, all System Test Coordinators will receive a copy of Dr. Jim Popham's book, *Transformative Assessment*. Dr. Popham was the keynote speaker at the April 2008 OPI Assessment Conference. His entertaining presentation on formative assessment set the stage for new directions for statewide assessment. Please share the book and consider Jim's advice and tips.

OPI Assessment Contacts

- ✚ Gayle Allen, Administrative Specialist, gallen2@mt.gov, 406-444-3511
- ✚ Karen Richem, Assessment Specialist, krichem@mt.gov, 406-444-0748
- ✚ Judy Snow, State Assessment Director, jsnow@mt.gov, 406-444-3656
- ✚ FAX: 406-444-0743

